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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft settlement

For almost 30 years I worked for Community Colleges in Washington State as a computer instructor, Data Processing Director and at time of retirement, Director of Information Technology for the Community Colleges of Spokane. During those thirty years I was involved in the decision and approval process for the purchase of thousands of PC's, Apple Computers, Unix systems and computer software. These decisions were always based on what products local industry was using and what was the best technology for the application. When Microsoft products were chosen, it was due to superior products to do the job and to implement the industry defacto standard in order to keep technical support costs reasonable and applications compatible. We found Microsoft an excellent supporter of education in our state. Microsoft worked with the Washington Community College Computing Consortium over the years to provide much needed educational discounts, training and support to faculty, staff and indirectly students.

I do not feel the colleges, faculty or students were harmed in any significant way from the monopoly Microsoft gained over the years in desktop operating systems. Microsoft simply developed the best technology and prevailed in the marketplace. However since the courts have determined that Microsoft benefited unduly from their contracting practices, a remedy should be sought that provides the greatest benefits to our society. A breakup is not warranted, but changes in contracting practices with computer vendors should be implemented.

A decision by the courts that impacts education and students throughout the country will be far more valuable for our society than a rebate scheme to individuals or other companies which primarily benefit attorneys. Since product donations to schools as proposed by Microsoft is objected to by it's competitors as giving Microsoft unfair advantage, an alternative would be for the court to require the company to distribute, as a fine, several billion \$'s cash to schools throughout the nation to upgrade and improve their technology. The technology to purchase would be determined by each individual school district or college. They should be free to purchase products such as books, supplies, software, networks, communications, Apple Computers, Unix systems, whatever they determine are their priorities. This approach would distribute a large amount of cash through the schools to a wide variety of vendors, and benefit our economic recovery in the short term. But most importantly everyone in our country would benefit in the long term as our schools will be better able prepare our students for competition in the increasingly technical and complex world economy.

Finally, it is important to conclude this case and let Microsoft and their competitors decide their fates in the marketplace, not in the courts.

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